United Nations S/2018/875

Security Council

Distr.: General
28 September 2018

Original: English

Letter dated 27 September 2018 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the sixtieth monthly report of the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) (see annex), submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). The present report covers the period from 24 August to 23 September 2018.

As previously communicated to the Security Council, the OPCW Technical Secretariat has been analysing the information contained in a note verbale dated 10 July 2018 from the Syrian Arab Republic. The information consisted of responses to the non-exhaustive list of questions attached to a letter dated 10 April 2018 from the Director-General on the outstanding issues related to the declaration of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic. In that regard, I note that the analysis thereof has now been completed and, moreover, that most of the information provided by the Syrian Arab Republic had already been conveyed to the OPCW Secretariat.

I welcome the willingness of the OPCW Technical Secretariat to continue its engagement with the authorities of the Syrian Arab Republic to clarify all gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies in its initial declaration and subsequent submissions. I reiterate my previous calls upon the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate with OPCW and, thereby, to provide the necessary assurance to the international community regarding the elimination of its chemical weapons programme.

On 6 July 2018, the OPCW fact-finding mission in the Syrian Arab Republic issued an interim report on the alleged use of toxic chemicals as a weapon in Duma on 7 April. On 7 August, the Secretariat received a note verbale from the Syrian Arab Republic in which the latter provided comments on the interim report. I note that the fact-finding mission continues to collect and analyse information with regard to that incident, and I look forward to the issuance of the final report in due course. I further note the continuing efforts by the fact-finding mission to translate and analyse the information provided by the Syrian Arab Republic with respect to four other alleged incidents.

Further to the decision taken by the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction at its fourth special session, on 27 June 2018, the Director-General will provide a progress report on the implementation of the decision to the Executive Council at its eighty-ninth session, which will be held from 9 to 12 October 2018.

As I have stated before, there can be no justification for the use of chemical weapons. In this regard, I note with great concern recent statements, including in the Security Council, alleging plans for the possible further use of chemical weapons in Idlib. I reiterate that, beyond the immediate and unacceptable human toll that such an attack would take, it could lead to a further deterioration of the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. I also reiterate my previous calls for unity in the Security Council to ensure that those who use, or have used, chemical weapons are held accountable.

(*Signed*) António **Guterres**

Annex

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

I have the honour to transmit to you my report entitled "Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme", prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of the decision EC-M-33/DEC.1 of the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), both dated 27 September 2013, for transmission to the Council (see enclosure). My report covers the period from 24 August to 23 September 2018, as well as the reporting requirements in Executive Council decision EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013.

(*Signed*) Fernando **Arias**

Enclosure

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

Note by the Director-General

Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme

Background

1. In accordance with subparagraph 2(f) of the decision by the Executive Council (hereinafter "the Council") at its Thirty-Third Meeting (EC-M-33/DEC.1, dated 27 September 2013), the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat") is to report to the Council on a monthly basis regarding the implementation of that decision. In accordance with paragraph 12 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), the report by the Secretariat is also to be submitted to the Security Council through the Secretary-General.

2. The Council, at its Thirty-Fourth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Detailed Requirements for the Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons and Syrian Chemical Weapons Production Facilities" (EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013). In paragraph 22 of that decision, the Council decided that the Secretariat should report on its implementation "in conjunction with its reporting required by subparagraph 2 (f) of Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1".

3. The Council, at its Forty-Eighth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria" (EC-M-48/DEC.1, dated 4 February 2015) noting the Director-General's intent to include reports of the OPCW Fact Finding Mission in Syria (FFM), along with information on the Council's discussion thereof, as part of the monthly reporting pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). Similarly, the Council, at its Eighty-First Session, adopted a decision entitled "Report by the Director-General Regarding the Declaration and Related Submissions by the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-81/DEC.4, dated 23 March 2016), noting the Director-General's intent to provide information on the implementation of that decision.

4. The Council, at its Eighty-Third Session, adopted a decision entitled "OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism Reports on Chemical Weapons Use in the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-83/DEC.5, dated 11 November 2016). In subparagraph 12(a) of that decision, the Council decided that the Director-General shall "regularly inform the Council on the implementation of this decision and incorporate information regarding the implementation of this decision into his monthly reporting to the United Nations Security Council, through the United Nations Secretary-General, regarding EC-M-33/DEC.1".

5. This, the sixtieth monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council decisions and includes information relevant to the period from 24 August 2018 to 23 September 2018.

Progress achieved by the Syrian Arab Republic in meeting the requirements of Executive Council decisions EC-M-33/DEC.1 and EC-M-34/DEC.1

6. Progress by the Syrian Arab Republic is as follows:

(a) As stated in previous reports, the Secretariat has verified the destruction of all 27 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) declared by the Syrian Arab Republic.

(b) On 17 September 2018, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its fifty eighth monthly report (EC-89/P/NAT.3, dated 17 September 2018) regarding activities on its territory related to the destruction of its CWPFs, as required by paragraph 19 of EC M 34/DEC.1.

Progress in the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons by States Parties hosting destruction activities

7. As stated in previous reports, all of the chemicals declared by the Syrian Arab Republic that were removed from its territory in 2014 have been destroyed.

Activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to Executive Council decisions EC-81/DEC.4 and EC-83/DEC.5

8. During the reporting period, the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) continued its efforts to clarify all outstanding issues regarding the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic in accordance with paragraph 3 of Council decision EC-81/DEC.4 and paragraph 6 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5.

9. As stated in the previous report (EC-89/DG.1, dated 24 July 2018), on 10 July the Secretariat received a note verbale from the Syrian Arab Republic with responses to the questions attached to the Director-General's letter to the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Syrian Arab Republic, Dr Faisal Mekdad, dated 10 April 2018. These questions pertain to the chemical weapons-related activities conducted at the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC). An analysis of the information provided in the aforementioned letter has been completed. It was noted that most of the information provided through the letter dated 10 July 2018 had already been conveyed to the Secretariat. The Secretariat will continue its engagement with the Syrian authorities with a view to clarifying all gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies noted in its initial declaration and further submissions.

10. In accordance with paragraph 10 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, the Secretariat is in the process of planning the inspections at the sites identified by the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism in its third and fourth reports. The Secretariat also continues to monitor the security situation through the United Nations Department of Safety and Security to identify permissive security conditions for those inspections.

11. Pursuant to paragraph 11 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, the Secretariat is in the process of planning the next inspections to be conducted at the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the SSRC.

Other activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to the Syrian Arab Republic

12. The United Nations Office for Project Services continues to provide support to the OPCW mission in the Syrian Arab Republic in accordance with the Tripartite Agreement.

13. As at the cut-off date of this report, one OPCW staff member was deployed as part of the OPCW mission in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Supplementary resources

14. As previously reported, the Trust Fund for Syria Missions was established in November 2015 to support the OPCW FFM and other remaining activities, such as those of the DAT. As at the cut-off date of this report, total contributions to this fund stood at EUR 17.2 million. Contribution agreements had been concluded with Canada, Chile, Finland, France, Germany, Monaco, New Zealand, the Republic of

Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and the European Union.

Activities carried out with respect to the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria

15. Guided by Council decisions EC-M-48/DEC.1 and EC-M-50/DEC.1 (dated 23 November 2015), as well as by United Nations Security Council resolution 2209 (2015), the FFM continues to study all available information relating to the allegations of use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

16. On 6 July, the Secretariat issued a Note entitled "Interim Report of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria Regarding the Incident of Alleged Use of Toxic Chemicals as a Weapon in Douma, Syrian Arab Republic, on 7 April 2018" (S/1645/2018, dated 6 July 2018 and Corr.1, dated 10 July 2018). On 7 August, the Secretariat received a note verbale from the Syrian Arab Republic that provided comments on the interim report. The FFM continues to collect and analyse information with regard to the alleged use of toxic chemicals as a weapon in Douma and will provide a final report on its findings in due course.

17. In July, the FFM requested and was provided with a number of documents by the National Authority of the Syrian Arab Republic pertaining to four reported incidents currently under investigation: two incidents in Kharbit Masasnah on 7 July 2017 and 4 August 2017, respectively, one incident in Al-Salamiyah on 9 August 2017, and another in Souran on 8 November 2017. The FFM is currently translating and analysing the information contained in these documents.

Activities related to the use of chemical weapons in Syria carried out by the Secretariat with respect to decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 of the Conference of the States Parties at its Fourth Special Session

18. The Conference of the States Parties (hereinafter "the Conference") at its Fourth Special Session adopted a decision entitled "Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use" (C-SS-4/DEC.3, dated 27 June 2018) which, inter alia, addressed the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. In paragraph 8 of the decision, the Conference encouraged the Director General to continue to provide regular updates on the FFM's operations, taking into account the need to protect the security and safety of Secretariat personnel.

19. In paragraph 10 of the decision, the Conference decided that the Secretariat shall put in place arrangements to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic by identifying and reporting on all information potentially relevant to the origin of those chemical weapons in those instances in which the FFM in Syria determines or has determined that use or likely use occurred, and cases for which the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism has not issued a report. The Conference further decided, in paragraph 12, that the Secretariat shall preserve and provide information to the investigation mechanism established by the United Nations General Assembly in resolution 71/248 (2016), as well as to any relevant investigatory entities established under the auspices of the United Nations.

20. Pursuant to paragraph 24 of the decision, a progress report on the implementation of C-SS-4/DEC.3 will be issued to the Council at its Eighty-Ninth Session.

Conclusion

21. The main focus of the future activities of the OPCW mission in the Syrian Arab Republic will be on the activities of the FFM; the implementation of Council decisions EC-83/DEC.5 and EC-81/DEC.4, including declaration-related issues; annual inspections of the underground structures already verified as destroyed; and implementation of Conference decision C-SS-4/DEC.3.